



PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT: USING RADIO PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

USING RADIO PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT

Even the best designed workforce development programs can fail if they do not recruit enough qualified participants. This bulletin will provide you with guidance on using radio public service announcements (PSAs), an effective, but often underutilized no-cost recruitment tool. A well-designed PSA will not only reach a large group of prospective participants but also inform employers and the general public about your services and help establish your “brand” as an effective employment and training provider.

WHAT IS A RADIO PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT?



A radio public service announcement is a brief message about a non-profit agency's activities, programs and events that is aired by local radio stations. They typically range from 15 to 60 seconds and are aired at no cost.

While radio stations are not mandated to play PSAs, they are required by the Federal Communications Commission to serve “in the public interest.” Most radio stations will use PSAs to meet this requirement and will donate a portion of the commercial spots to non-profit agencies. In some markets, competition for PSAs is very stiff, and you must be prepared to make a compelling case for airing your announcement.

HOW TO GET YOUR PSA AIRED

1. REACH OUT TO THE RADIO STATION

Broadcasters are much more likely to air your PSA if you reach out to them in advance. Start by contacting the radio station and identifying the name and title of the person who is responsible for



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reviewing PSAs. That person may be the public affairs or community affairs director in large markets or the general manager in smaller markets. You should also determine their preferred length in terms of words or seconds. If you are in a large radio market, focus on those stations that reach your target audience.

2. PREPARE A ONE-PAGE COVER LETTER

Along with your contact information, your cover letter should briefly describe your organization and the



reason for making your request. Keep in mind that the person reviewing your request will want to know if your program is of interest to their audience and whether their involvement with your initiative will increase listener loyalty. They also want to know if your agency is well qualified to meet the employment and training needs of its listeners. You should, therefore, provide some employment statistics relevant to your community and describe how your program will benefit their listeners. You should also enclose a copy of an agency brochure if it demonstrates your organization's capacity to deliver effective services, along with a copy of your IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter if your agency is not widely recognized as a nonprofit. We've included an example of a cover letter at the end of this bulletin.

3. PROVIDE YOUR PSA ON A SEPARATE PAGE

At the top of this this page put “PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT.” You should also list the dates for airing the PSA, its length, and your contact information. The PSA should be written in capital letters. We recommend sending two PSAs. One should be 15 seconds and the other 30 seconds, unless the station has other requirements. At the end of this bulletin is a sample PSA.

4. DEVELOP A WORKING RELATIONSHIP



If possible, develop a working relationship with the person responsible for PSAs. Ask them if there are any opportunities to partner with the station on upcoming events and ask how you can be a resource to the station. Be prepared to make yourself available for interviews and provide them with information on local workforce development issues.

5. FOLLOW-UP

Periodically touch base with your contact at the radio station to determine if the PSA was aired. If the PSA is helping you achieve your agency’s enrollment goals, let that the person know and formally thank them for their efforts on your behalf. You may also want to consider recognizing the radio station at your agency’s award and recognition ceremony.

TIPS FOR WRITING PSA’S

- ☛ Use simple words and phrases.
- ☛ Open with a “catchy” statement that briefly describes your organization’s purpose.
- ☛ Remember to cover who, what, when, where, and how.
- ☛ Don’t use acronyms that are unfamiliar to the public.
- ☛ When you finished writing your PSA, read it out loud. If any phrase causes you to stumble, rewrite it.
- ☛ Don’t overwhelm the listener with information. Let the listener know where they can obtain more information.
- ☛ At the end of the PSA, insert “###” to indicate the end of the announcement.



Cover Letter Example

Workforce Development, Inc.
123 Workforce Development Drive
Anytown, NY 10001
Telephone: 1-800-123-4567

Mr. John Doe
Community Affairs Director
WXRD
123 Broadcast Drive
Anytown, NY 10001

Dear Mr. Doe:

For more than 20 years, Workforce Development, Inc., a nonprofit community-based organization, has provided high-level training for jobs in our community where critical skill shortages exist. Now we need your help. Our organization was recently awarded a grant by the U.S. Department of Labor to provide much needed skills training in high growth industries. We are currently recruiting participants for this new initiative and have prepared a 15-second PSA intended to inform the public about the no-cost services we provide to both under-employed and unemployed members of our community. By airing this announcement, you can help make Anytown's workers competitive in the global marketplace and reduce our country's dependence on foreign workers.

I have enclosed a 15-second PSA along with our program brochure and a copy of our 501-C-3 form. If you have any questions about our services or need additional information, please do not hesitate to call. We thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,

Fred Doe
Executive Director

Enclosures

SAMPLE PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Workforce Development, Inc.
123 Workforce Development Drive
Anytown, NY 10001
Telephone: 1-800-123-4567

November 7, 2013

CONTACT: Fred Doe
START: November 20, 2013
STOP: December 30, 2013
LENGTH: 15-seconds

ARE YOU SEEKING EMPLOYMENT IN A HIGH-GROWTH INDUSTRY
BUT LACK THE SKILLS AND CREDENTIALS NEEDED FOR THE
JOB? THROUGH A GRANT FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR,
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, INC. CAN PROVIDE YOU WITH HIGH-
LEVEL TRAINING AND PLACE YOU ON A PATH TO CAREER
SUCCESS. CALL 1-800-123-4567 TO LEARN MORE AND APPLY.

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